

PBS MACNEIL/LEHRER  
26 April 1984

CONGRESS/CIA/  
MOYNIHAN

LEHRER: Sen. Patrick Moynihan changed his mind today. He decided to stay on as vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee after all. The New York Democrat announced the switch late this afternoon after he and other members of the committee met with CIA Director William Casey. Moynihan had said he was quitting the number two job on the committee in protest of the way Casey handled CIA involvement in the mining of Nicaragua's harbors, particularly in his briefing of the intelligence committee. Today's meeting was behind closed doors, but afterwards, here's how Moynihan explained his decision and how other members of the committee reacted to the Casey meeting. SEN. DANIEL MOYNIHAN (D-N.Y.): The committee and the CIA have agreed on the need for more thorough and effective oversight procedures, especially in the area of covert actions. The committee will move promptly to develop new procedures to ensure that the Senate will be fully and currently informed. The Central Intelligence Agency has pledged its full cooperation in this effort and recognizes the requirement to provide the committee with prior notice of any significant anticipated intelligence activity, as provided by the Intelligence Oversight Act.

SEN. LLOYD BENTSEN (D-Texas): I think it's time that we declare a cease-fire between the intelligence committee and the CIA and try to have it get on back to intelligence gathering. The director stated that, uh, in retrospect, that he felt he had not, uh, highlighted the issue and, uh, had not provided sufficient information on it and, uh, that that wouldn't happen again.

SEN. RICHARD LUGAR (R-Ind.): The bulk of the blame falls, in our judgment in this assessment, upon the director or upon those who were supposed to brief us. It was apparent, as we have gone over the details, that a number of junctures passed in which we did not have information in a timely and comprehensive manner to do our duty. The director has apologized for oversights. He has assured us that it's his intention to work with us in bringing about new procedures that are, are better going to ensure that we can do our duty. Now we must meet again, and we shall very shortly, on several proposals by members. And undoubtedly, Mr. Keith and others will participate in trying to pin down precisely how we go through this oversight procedure with a great deal of assurance.

LEHRER: And the Justice Department said today it will not appoint a special prosecutor to investigate CIA activities in Central America. Thirteen Democratic members of the House had asked Attorney General William French Smith to see if the CIA violated the Neutrality Act. Smith is reported to have written the congressmen today saying the law which was passed in 1794 does not cover official actions of the U.S. government. Robin?